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the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 2

Fifteenth Year

January 16, 1948

Help to Orphaned Missions

Dr L.S. Albright, Secretary of the International Missionary Council, writes in the Bulletin of the I.M.C. (December 1947) on the help which is to be given to Orphaned Missions (cut off from their sending countries and societies).

"Orphaned Missions continue to be a practical reality and their support extends into 1948 as a continuing necessity, certainly an increasing necessity. (Our earliest estimate for the duration of Orphaned Missions was until mid-year 1949 but that now appears too optimistic). Perhaps this does not speak too well for postwar missionary planning. We might as well admit that we underestimated the extent and duration of relief and reconstruction needs in Asia and did not allow for the depreciation of currencies in relation to the American dollar. We did not anticipate the impoverishment of British and Continental missionary societies and their inability to continue their work at full strength.

"Having admitted that our Christian global strategy has been faulty in all of these particulars, the one thing we must not do is to let the situation go be default. We must not fail to present the situation as it is and to challenge the Churches through their mission boards or relief agencies, as well as individuals, to make another concerted effort to meet the issue before us". That calls for "continued and increased gifts to Orphaned Missions and the taking over by North American boards, on a trusteeship basis, of contiguous mission fields in charge of financially impaired British and Continental societies, preferably with existing personnel, so as to hold the line in the emergency and to take advantage of unprecedented opportunities with bewildered but grateful and seeking multitudes."

E.P.S. Geneva

JAPAN

Advance in Christian Education

There are now 70,000 students enrolled in 98 Christian schools in Japan, stated the Christian Education Association in Tokyo. By types of schools there are: 4,000 in 6 universities; 10,000 in 12 men's colleges; 10,000 in 16 women's colleges; 15,000 in 17 middle schools; 29,000 in 42 girls' high schools and 2,000 in 5 primary schools.

E.P.S. Geneva

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HUNGARYRebuilding Churches

According to the Hungarian Protestant News Bulletin (January 1948) the help sent for rebuilding of churches and church repairs by the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches has throughout the whole country the effect of an incentive for Christians to join their efforts to make themselves large contributions towards rebuilding of churches. The article quotes some data to illustrate this fact.

According to recent reports renovation of all Calvinist churches has been finished in Budapest though none of them had remained intact during the very long siege.

In Eastern Hungary in the County of Szabolcs five Calvinist churches have been completely destroyed - four of them have already been rebuilt and the fifth will be finished in a very short time. One of these churches in the small village of Vencsello was consecrated on November 2, 1947, exactly three years after its explosion. To the rebuilding of this church 1000 working days have been voluntarily offered by the members of the parish; masonry and timber work has also been done voluntarily, only the materials having been paid by the Church. Besides this the members of the community have given 360 cwt of wheat and 5,000 florints for the reconstruction work of the Church. It must be mentioned that the whole community numbers less than 1000 souls and the war has not only caused the ruin of the church but has also caused serious damage to the private fortunes of the parishioners.

In Debrecen during the commemoration service of the Reformation 1200 flor. were collected whilst on that same day in the other Calvinist churches of the town more than 4000 florints were given for the building of the new prayer-house. We can only appreciate the importance of these efforts if we consider that today in Hungary the normal salary of an employee does not surpass 350 florins per month, and a pair of shoes costs about 150 florints. E.P.S. Geneva

DENMARKDanish Inter-Church Work

The reorganisation of the Danish Ecumenical Council will make possible a considerable extension of inter-church cooperation. In order to get a more efficient representation, a commission has been formed, consisting of 43 members (maximum 60 members) including representatives of most of the various congregations and organisations within the Danish State Church and of the Council of the Free Congregations (including Baptists, Methodists, the Salvation Army and the Evangelical Missionary Association). From this Commission a board of 15 representatives is elected, and in addition a small committee and a secretariat is appointed.

"We should like to have a broader contact with the Danish Christian people" Dean Høgsbro, President of the Council, declared. "Also it has become apparent that what we need is a more flexible and efficient organisation for quick action." Dean Høgsbro characterised the further motives of the reorganisation of the Council as follows:

"The continuation of the service to German refugees rendered by the Church is one of our chief tasks. Further we intend to continue our study conferences with representatives from various countries - recently a conference took place at Hillerød. Besides this there is the material aid abroad given irrespective of nationality. We have also a press service as a link with foreign countries, and finally we take part in the common study work of the World Council of Churches preparing the Church Assembly in Amsterdam next summer."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Issues Facing the Congregational Church

The Congregational Church in the United States, established in 1620 by the Pilgrim Fathers, is facing one of the most crucial decisions in its history.

Since 1931 the Congregational Churches in the United States have merged with the Christian Churches, and have taken the denominational name of Congregational Christian Churches. The Churches of this denomination in the interest of Protestant unity are now taking a nation-wide vote on a proposed merger with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, by which both church bodies would hereafter be known as "The United Church of Christ."

The final decision on this merger which has been under consideration since 1942, will be taken at the biennial meeting of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches, to be held in Oberlin, Ohio, from June 17 to 24. At the last biennial meeting in June 1946 in Grinnell, Iowa, it was voted by a majority of 474 to 4 to submit the merger proposal to the Churches for a vote and to await final decision at the 1948 meeting.

In the United States there are now 5,783 churches in the Congregational Christian denomination. They have a total communicant membership of 1,150,853. The Evangelical and Reformed Church, which has a total membership of 695,000 represents a union of the Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Training of Clergymen's Wives

More than a score of young women are enrolled in classes preparing for careers as clergymen's wives. These courses are held in Sewanee, Tenn. The courses are given by University of the South (Episcopal) and are said to be the first three-year curriculum offered to increase the effectiveness of the woman in her husband's work.

Subjects taught include church activities and organisations, visual education aids, religious education in the parish, churchmanship, preparation for confirmation, pastoral counseling and the church's teachings. The full course will attempt to deal with all problems and opportunities confronting the wife of a parish priest.

E.P.S. Geneva

CANADAWomen Ministers

The United Church of Canada has 17 women on its list of ordained ministers, three of them are married. In 1932 the United Church admitted women to be elders and since then they have been eligible to sit in the higher courts of the church. The Baptist Church is the only other communion to give ordination to a woman.

These facts are stressed in a contribution prepared by the Canadian Council of Churches to the inquiry on work of women in the Churches undertaken in connection with the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. "In Canada", says the report, "it was more the need in isolated parished for trained women who could administer the Sacraments and officiate at marriages" that moved the Church to admit them to the full ministry. "Even so there has been no unanimity of opinion among the Church, nor have there been larger numbers of women applying for admission to the ministry."

E.P.S. Geneva

GREECE1900th Anniversary of St. Paul's Teaching

The two Faculties of the Greek Orthodox Church in Athens and Salonica are working to prepare a festival in the year 1950 at the occasion of the 1900th anniversary of St. Paul's teaching of the "Kaine Didache" in Europe (see E.P.S. No. 42, 1947).

Professor Alivisatos gives the following details: "The programme of the festival we are planning has two chief items. First a pilgrimage to all the places where St. Paul preached: Corinth, Athens, Philippi, Nicapolis, Crete and the Islands. Special services and conferences are planned to be held at the different towns. The second item is the publishing of a series of volumes of essays on St. Paul's work and theology, written by the theologians of the well known theological faculties of the world... We hope to have a good response, in demonstration of what all of us owe to St. Paul."

E.P.S. Geneva

Conference of the Refugee Division of the Department of
Reconstruction of the World Council

The Executive Secretary of the Refugee Division of the Department of Reconstruction of the World Council, the Rev. Elfan Rees, invited his collaborators in Geneva, and all those who were working for the Refugee Division in other countries, to a conference at Bossey from January 5 to 9, 1948. At this conference plans were made for the new year's work of all kinds in the European countries in which the Refugee Division is active. There was also opportunity for exchanging experiences.

In England, Holland, France and Belgium the Refugee Division is responsible mainly for the foreign civilian workers; in Italy it is in charge of the camps for interned persons and for emigrants. In Germany, and to a certain extent also in Austria, the work is incorporated in the care of three large groups of refugees and fugitives:

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1) those who are under the care of the International Refugee Organisation (I.R.O.);

2) the "foreigners" (chiefly Hungarian and Ukrainian Orthodox, large numbers of whom are now in South Germany);

3) the "Volksdeutsch" (people of German origin) and the alarmingly large number of German refugees and fugitives from the Eastern provinces.

The German groups are cared for by the Ecumenical Commission through the "Evangelisches Hilfswerk in Germany". The other groups are under the care of the services set up in Germany by the Refugee Commission in conjunction with the Lutheran World Federation and "Church World Service". A similar arrangement has been applied to Austria.

A considerable part of the discussions was devoted to questions of emigration, which is getting slowly under way for non-German refugees. In the case of German refugees it is usually not possible. The Ecumenical Commission stresses the need for looking after emigrants in the countries which receive them. It endeavours to help them to settle down there, and in England, for example, this work is supported by the Government.

A special feature of the conference were the hours devoted to Bible study. This combination of work, study and leisure helped to weld the 25 participants into a real "team", and will greatly facilitate the work of individuals in their posts abroad.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

Latest Development of Evangelical Student Associations

In spite of all the difficulties which faced them, the Evangelical Student Associations in Germany have developed, since the end of the war, into a highly important factor in the process of spiritual renewal. A particularly encouraging fact is the increase in the number of members in the non-theological faculties, especially at the technical colleges. During the last six months the number of students who take an active part in this Association has risen everywhere in a most encouraging manner.

In Bremen and Freysing, for instance, where the Evangelical Student Associations are just opening up, the number of members increased slowly from 20 to 120, in addition to old students and professors who formed a basis. Often a Student Association develops quite suddenly, beginning with a merely external appearance of Christianity, and grows into a centre of lively missionary responsibility. In the majority of Student Associations there is a clear tendency towards consolidation and permanence. We quote the following extract from a special report:

"In Göttingen the student chaplain holds a service every fortnight, and from time to time arranges Bible study, together with some of the professors, and an open evening for "Freshmen" in his own home. His work of spiritual care among individual students takes him all day, and follows him into his own house. The common rooms were too small for the weekly Bible study; they had to take a church. Before the Bible study they regularly take Holy Communion. At the beginning there were about 15; now there are about 50 guests. In Tübingen and Freiburg also, guests are invited to the Lord's Table much more frequently than is usual with us. Every time one visits these Student Associations one

feels thankful that Jesus Christ is drawing students so strongly into His Church. This is shown by the many forms of spiritual life (Bible study, early morning services, end-of-term services, study circles, social evenings, conferences, choirs, prayer meetings, spiritual care), the large number of tasks and offices undertaken, the excellent relationship between chaplains and laymen, the easy and natural solution of difficulties (e.g. the confessional question) which make work difficult in the Evangelical Church in Germany.

Circles have recently been formed in the separate universities, to study political and social questions. The head of these circles for the whole of Germany is the "Political Commission" under the directorship of Pastor Erwin Krämer in Bonn.

No less important is the help given by the Student Associations (as before the Nazi period) to foreign students, who are today mostly "displaced persons". The social welfare of German students is taken care of by the "Student Help" Department at the headquarters of the German Evangelical Student Association in Stuttgart, which cooperates closely with Dr Gertenmaier's "Evangelisches Hilfswerk". The Chairman of the Council of German Student Associations is Dr R. von Thadden in Geneva, who is thus the head of the whole reconstructed evangelical work among students in Germany.

E.P.S. Geneva

YUGOSLAVIA

The Serbian Orthodox Church Today

A correspondent writes: "The Serbian Orthodox Patriarchal Church had suffered heavy losses during the years of occupation. Three Serbian Bishops and many priests were put to death as martyrs. Two thousand churches were destroyed and many monasteries looted. In Croatia alone 16 monasteries were laid waste. Since the Church is separated from the State and since agrarian reform has been carried out, the Church has had to give up all its property. Only in the case of the historic churches and monasteries, they were allowed to retain 30 yokes of land.

But these external difficulties have brought inner renewal to the Orthodox Church. The churches have never been as full as they are today. Church-goers give most generously to the support of the clergy, who receive nothing today either from the State or from the Church. So that the congregations now form a closed body within the Church - a very encouraging fact.

Daily services are held every morning and evening in all the churches. There is no censorship on the preaching, except from the church authorities themselves. During the last few months six new Bishops have been consecrated and three new bishoprics have been created. It is planned to consecrate some more bishops in the summer of 1948, in order to fill those positions which are still vacant.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has a theological Faculty in Belgrad (the Roman Catholic Church has two, in Zagreb and Ljubljana). The Orthodox Church also has two colleges for priests in Belgrad and Prizren, in Southern Serbia. The staff of the Faculty, which was closed during the war, is composed of 16 professors and lecturers, who give the usual lectures held in Orthodox theological Faculties.

In spite of the separation of Church and State, the Theological Faculty is still part of the University. The State has contributed a great deal towards the renewal of the Faculty. There are no State authorities at the lectures. The relation between teachers and students is like that between the members of a family. In order to help the most promising students, the professors have given up part of their own salaries. There is great enthusiasm for the studies, so that the Church can draw daily on new forces for its work for God's Kingdom.

Relations with the other Faculties are much better today than before the war. There are at present 145 students in the Theological Faculty, who will probably be ordained as soon as they have passed their final examination. In addition to the usual lectures, emergency courses are being held, to educate clergy for the smaller churches in the villages.

There is no anti-religious propaganda in Yugoslavia. But there is no longer any official religious instruction given in the public schools. Hence the teachers of religion are not paid by the State (except in the people's republics of Croatia and Slovenia very often). Participation in religious instruction, which is given during free periods on the curriculum, is voluntary. The Church arranges collections to pay the teachers, and people give very generously.

There is a great lack of adequate Christian literature, since the religious libraries have in many cases been decimated. The library of the Theological Faculty in Belgrad was almost completely destroyed. The publication of Orthodox writings, which are comprehensible to everyone, is an important task.

Christian youth work, which was undertaken before the war by the Y.M.C.A. and other youth organisations, is now organised by the teachers of religion.

E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.

Communists Forbidden to go to Church

A discussion has taken place between the Soviet papers "Komsomol Truth" and "The Young Bolshevik". The latter recommended that leniency be shown to believers, and that they should be patiently taught how harmful religious faith is. The argument was settled by the Central Committee of the Komsomol; it decreed that Communists were prohibited to go to church. Their attitude toward religion - according to "Komsomol Truth" - is clear and unchangeable. It is considered inadmissible for members of the Komsomol to believe in God and to observe religious rituals. The recommendation of the "Young Bolshevik" is called "nothing but an effort to prove the possibility of a union of materialism with faith and idealism. That necessarily means leaving Marxism."

E.P.S. Geneva

PHILIPPINES: The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church (U.S.A.) granted the request of the Philippine Independent Church, also known as the Aglipayan Church, for episcopal consecration of its bishops (see E.P.S.No. 35, 1947). Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes hailed the vote of the House of Bishops as "a most agreeable surprise", since "we were prepared to wait three years". Future plans include the establishing of seminaries for the training of priests.

E.P.S. Geneva

